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AUTHOR Wright, Mary J.
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ABSTRACT

A brief overview of the history of the scientific study of the child in Canada is provided in this paper. Discussion begins with an account of the scholarly interests and activities of James Mark Baldwin, who brought modern psychology to Canada, and Frederic Tracy, who objected to child-centered approaches to child rearing. The remainder of the paper focuses on the professional activities and ideas of William Emet Blatz, Canada's first really modern child psychologist. Blatz' role in the success of the nursery school established in the early 1920's at the University of Toronto and the research conducted and theories developed there are briefly described. Blatz, it is noted, produced a theory of personality development (called "security" theory) centering on a concept of mental health and how it could be attained. The importance of research on the Dionne Quintuplets in persuading the University of Toronto to create an Institute of Child Study was also indicated. Concluding discussion focuses on elements of Blatz's psychology, including functionalist, cognitive developmentalist, and biological orientations; the idea of "selection" (i.e., choice behavior) as the essence of consciousness; and the interaction of selection, motivation, goal-seeking, emotion, and the active child's appraisal of the situation--all of which influence learning. Brief mention is made of Blatz's views about the psychological needs of infants and preschool-aged children, the characteristics and outcomes of parenting that meet those needs, and Blatz's scholarly production. (RH)

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Mary J. Wright, University of Western Ontario

Early Canadian Child Study: From Baldwin and Tracy to Blatz

James Mark Baldwin, whose recently rediscovered ideas about the mental development of children are now being discussed widely, was not a Canadian. However, he spent four years in Canada and interested a young Canadian, Frederick Tracy, in child study, whose work in the field subsequently gained a remarkable amount of international attention.

Baldwin was appointed Professor of Philosophy at the University of Toronto in 1889. He brought modern psychology to Canada and founded in Toronto a psychological laboratory on the Wundtion style which was the first such laboratory on British soil. The same year Tracy, a bright young student who had just completed his B.A. with high honours, was made an instructor in philosophy. Thus Baldwin and Tracy became colleagues and worked together until 1892.

Although Baldwin's first book (Baldwin 1895) on the mental development of the child did not appear until 1895, it is clear that while in Toronto he was already keenly interested in child development and formulating his theories about it. During this time, for example, he made extensive observations of his own two daughters. The data he obtained on their language were later used by Tracy in his doctoral thesis, which was a study of language development, a topic which he said was suggested to him by Baldwin (Tracy, 1893, p. 90, footnote).

In 1892, on Baldwin's recommendation, Tracy was accepted at Clark University to study with G. Stanley Hall. However, he must have arrived at Clark with his thesis well in hand for it was reported in his first book

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(Tracy, 1893) which was published the following year. One is tempted, therefore, to conclude that much of his dissertation research was done in Toronto perhaps under the supervision of Baldwin. It was this, Tracy's first book, The Psychology of Childhood, (Tracy, 1893) which brought him international attention. It was "hailed by a world hungry for knowledge about children" (Myers, 1982 p. 75), went through at least seven editions and was translated into several languages including German, Russian and Japanese.

Having obtained his Ph.D. Tracy returned to Toronto where he spent his entire teaching career. After his doctoral research he appears not to have done any further empirical studies of children, but he continued to write about them and to express opinions on how they should be educated. In the 1930s he was vehemently criticizing the new so-called "child-centered" approaches to child rearing which were being advocated at that time by Canada's first really modern child psychologist, William Emet Blatz.

The First Canadian Child Study Centres

Modern child study began in earnest in Canada in 1925. It was spawned by the Mental Hygiene Movement of Clifford Beers which, by 1918, had spilled over from the United States into Canada and resulted in the establishment of a Canadian National Committee for Mental hygiene under the very dynamic leadership of a man named Clarence Hincks. In the early 1920s this committee envisioned its concerns to include the "promotion" of mental health, as well as the treatment and prevention of mental illness, and set out to achieve its mental health goals by establishing two university-based nursery schools, which were to function as child study centres, one at McGill, the other at Toronto.

Funding for both centres was obtained by Hincks, primarily from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Foundation, and both were established in

the academic year 1925-1926. Unfortunately the McGill centre did not thrive, and funding for it was withdrawn at the end of five years, but the Toronto centre was a huge success. This was due mainly to the talents of its Director, W. E. Blatz, but also to the fact that initially the centre was under the general supervision of the Department of Psychology and received from it whole-hearted support. E. A. Bott the Department's Head helped with everything, and his wife Helen Bott became the first supervisor of the centre's parent education division and co-author with Blatz of his first two books (Blatz & Bott, 1929 & 1930).

From 1925 to 1938 the centre was called simply the St. George's Nursery School, but it was a very lively research centre. Two major longitudinal research projects were in progress: one to study the children accepted for the nursery school from the prenatal period to young adulthood, the other to study school-aged children. In the nursery school normative data were being obtained by keeping continuous records of all aspects of the children's behavior: their social interactions, emotional episodes, sleeping, eating, and toileting behavior and their reactions to management methods aimed at promoting self care and self management. The students trained at the centre were graduate students in psychology, most at the MA, but some at the PhD level. One of the latter was Mary D. Ainsworth (Ainsworth & Ainsworth, 1958), now eminent in her field, who began working with Blatz in 1937 on testing his theory of personality development. This theory was oriented around a concept of mental health and how it could be attained and was referred to as "security" theory.

During this period Blatz and his colleagues were also lively participants in the whole North American Child Study Movement. They were hosts to the annual NRC sponsored conference on child study in 1929 (the Site

chosen in part to avoid the restrictions of the Temperance Act in the United States) and in 1937 they themselves sponsored a unique conference which attracted much scientific interest. This was held to report the research which they and other scientists at the University of Toronto had done on the Dionne quintuplets. During this latter conference Blatz even chartered a special train to take the participants to Northern Ontario to see the five sisters.

The research on the Dionne Quintuplets persuaded the University of Toronto to do what Blatz had been asking it to do for a long time, i.e., create an Institute of Child Study. Some of the research had been interdisciplinary (Blatz et al., 1937; Blatz, 1938) and the possibilities of such research seemed to the University very exciting. So an Institute was established in 1938 and Blatz and his staff entered a new era which encompassed the war years and the period of rapid social change which followed.

During the war Blatz was an important consultant on child care in England and established a training school there to help prepare teachers to work in wartime day nurseries and other similar facilities. At home, Institute personnel were seconded to government to establish wartime day nurseries in Ontario and after the war to set standards for them. As a result in 1946 Ontario passed a Day Nurseries Act which had been drafted by Blatz and his colleagues which was not only one of the first of its kind on the North American continent, but set standards which have not, as yet, to my knowledge been excelled. After the war the Ontario government also launched a massive province-wide parent education program directed by Institute personnel. The "bibles" for this program were a series of parent education manuals produced by the Institute.

In summary Blatz was more than the Spock of his day in Canada. He had a massive influence on public policy as it pertained both to child welfare and education.

But What of the Man and His Psychology?

Blatz was exceedingly bright (Myers, 1982, p. 85). He was also well trained. He obtained his PhD in psychology in 1924 from the University of Chicago where he studied with Harvey Carr, but before that he had acquired both an M.A. in physiology and a degree in medicine from Toronto. His doctoral research was experimental. It was a study of the cardiac, respiratory and electrical phenomena involved in the emotion of fear (Blatz, 1925).

Blatz,a pioneer in his field, developed his own theories about learning and personality development and the implications of these for child rearing practices led him to attack and condemn all traditional "sacred cows" about education and child management. He also applied his learning theory in his approach to the public and deliberately shocked to arouse and alert. His cleverness, wit, and style made him not just controversial. He was, as a colleague once described him, "a general all-round disturber of the intellectual peace". Yet he impressed favourably most of the intelligentia and the influencial of Toronto, many of whom sent their children to his nursery school and were forced to take there a series of parent education courses.

Blatz was a functionalist and a cognitive developmentalist. He was opposed to behaviorism and never abandoned the conviction that consciousness, although difficult to study was the primary subject matter of psychology (Blatz, 1966). He was biologically oriented in the sense that he viewed learning in terms of adaptation and allocated to consciousness the most

fundamental role in the adaptation process. The essence of consciousness was for Blatz selection: the making of choices between behavioral options and the making of predictions about the possible outcomes of those choices. Selection was set in motion by motivation and motivation was, he insisted, always conscious. Learning, he said, begins with a challenge. It occurs when motivated individuals are goal-seeking but feel inadequate because they have no readily available responses for achieving their goals. Emotion plays a fundamental role in this process. Depending upon the degree of inadequacy felt, affective responses alert, focus attention and produce the energy needed to put forth the effort required to deal with the challenge. He thus emphasized the facilitating function of emotion as opposed to its disruptive potential. Blatz accounted for specific emotions in cognitive terms. He said they were a function of the child's appraisal of a situation. If the "emoting" child judged a challenge to be masterable the response was approach-attack (e.g., anger) if judged not masterable the response was withdrawal-flight (e.g., fear). Hence as children acquired knowledge and skill their appraisals of specific situations changed as did their behavioral and emotional responses to them.

Thus, Blatz viewed the child as "active" in his dealings with the environment. "Learning can never be mechanical" said Blatz because of "the active conscious participation of the individual" (Blatz, 1944, p. 46-47) and this led him to strenously attack formal education. He pointed out that a teacher who understood a child's motivation might create for that child a learning situation, but she could not make the child learn. It was the child Blatz insisted, who must initiate the action.

Blatz's theory of personality development caused him to speak out against authoritarianism and to offer alternative ways of guiding the

development of children. He postulated "security" as the primary goal of human beings, and conceived of this as a dynamic state, which grew out of trust in one's ability to deal with the future. He defined it as a state of mind, characterized by serenity, which accompanies a willingness to make decisions and accept the consequences of those decisions. He believed that to achieve security children in infancy and early childhood, needed to have consistent, trustworthy parents who were, as a result of their consistency, somewhat boring. This, he said gave children the courage and desire to reach out, accept insecurity, explore, learn and through this learning gradually develop trust in themselves, i.e., independent security. Blatz's plan of discipline was aimed at putting the locus of control squarely within the child. However, in the final formulation of his theory, developing trust in others during early childhood was also seen as the foundation for the development of satisfying interdependent relationships in adulthood in which decision-making and responsibility were shared. He emphasized the importance of giving children as much freedom as possible to make their own decisions, to experience the consequences of those decisions, both successes and failures, and acquire effective ways of coping with them. Blatz anticipated attribution theory and detailed the dangers of using extrinsic rewards and punishments of all kinds, including examination marks, and he spoke out against competition.

Blatz was "the" author or senior author of seven books, several monographs and many papers. The first six of his books dealt with not only research and theory but applications. Three were addressed primarily to parents (Blatz & Bott, 1929 and 1930; Blatz, 1940), two to nursery school teachers (Blatz, Millichamp, & Fletcher, 1935; Blatz, 1944) and one was on the Dionne Quintuplets (Blatz, 1938). In his last book, which was published

in 1966, after his death, entitled Human Security: Some Reflections (Blatz, 1966) he dealt mainly with his theories and these constitute a completely integrated package of ideas.

In conclusion, I would like to say that Canada was fortunate in having as its first dynamic and influential leader in the child care field a man like Blatz. He was a highly insightful psychologist and he anticipated much of what is now widely accepted as sound in the area of child guidance. As a result his descendants in the field have been able to move forward painlessly from his teachings to embrace the new cognitive insights of our time.

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